[Cite as *Ridgeway v. Ohio Bur. of Workers Comp.*, 2026-Ohio-4291.]

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO

EIGHTH APPELLATE DISTRICT
COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA

HOWARD RIDGEWAY,	:	
Plaintiff-Appellant,	:	No. 116666
v.	:	
OHIO BUREAU OF WORKERS COMPENSATION, ET AL.,	:	
Defendants-Appellees.	:	

JOURNAL ENTRY AND OPINION

JUDGMENT: AFFIRMED
RELEASED AND JOURNALIZED: October 29, 2026

Civil Appeal from the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas
Case No. CV-25-118849

Appearances:

Howard Ridgeway, *pro se*.

Battle & Polly LLC, Jake W. Aerni, and Steven C. Polly, *for appellee*.

MICHAEL JOHN RYAN, P.J.:

{¶ 1} In this accelerated appeal, plaintiff-appellant Howard Ridgeway ("Ridgeway"), pro se, appeals from the trial court's judgment granting the motion for summary judgment of defendant-appellee Spooner Risk Control Services, Inc.

("Spooner"). App.R. 11.1 and Loc.App.R. 11.1 govern accelerated appeals; the purpose of an accelerated appeal is to allow this court to render a brief and conclusory opinion. *State v. Priest*, 2014-Ohio-1735, ¶ 1 (8th Dist.). For the reasons that follow, we affirm.

{¶ 2} In June 2025, Ridgeway, pro se, filed this workers' compensation appeal in the court of common pleas. He sought allowance of workers' compensation for his glaucoma diagnosis, which he contended was caused by his exposure to headlights and nighttime driving he performed for his job as a truck driver for Spooner. Spooner disputed that Ridgeway's glaucoma diagnosis was work related.

{¶ 3} The trial court held a case-management conference on September 30, 2025, and, in a journal entry of the same date, established the following dates: discovery cutoff on January 2, 2026; Ridgeway's expert report due on February 2, 2026; Spooner's expert report due on March 2, 2026; dispositive motions due by March 16, 2026; and response and reply to dispositive motions due in accordance with Civ.R. 6(C). Trial was set for June 1, 2026.

{¶ 4} On February 19, 2026, over one month after the discovery cutoff date and two weeks after the due date of Ridgeway's expert report, Ridgeway filed a motion for an extension of time to respond to discovery. On March 2, 2026, the due date for Spooner's expert report to be filed, Spooner filed its motion for summary judgment. On March 9, 2026, the trial court granted Ridgeway's motion for an

extension of time, allowing him an additional seven days to respond to any outstanding discovery.

{¶ 5} On March 13, 2026, Ridgeway filed two motions: a motion for an extension of time to file an expert report and a motion for an extension of time to respond to discovery. On March 27, 2026, Ridgeway filed a motion for an extension of time to respond to discovery and Spooner's summary judgment motion. On April 27, 2026, Ridgeway filed a motion for leave to file a motion for summary judgment.

{¶ 6} The trial court held the final pretrial hearing on April 29, 2026, at which Ridgeway appeared pro se and counsel appeared on behalf of Spooner. The trial court memorialized the hearing in a journal entry, noting that the "case proceeds as scheduled subject to court ruling on pending motions. Rulings to be issued in separate order."

{¶ 7} On May 31, 2026, the trial court granted Spooner's motion for summary judgment. The court stated, in relevant part, the following in its judgment:

> [Ridgeway] has requested *multiple extensions to obtain an expert report* establishing that his eye condition (glaucoma) was caused by his employment. To date, [Ridgeway] has submitted his own statement and letters indicating his physical/mental health conditions. No expert has been identified, and no expert report has been generated to establish causation. *See* Civ.R. 26(B)(7)(C); Cuy. Cty. L.R. 21.1.

(Emphasis added.)

{¶ 8} Ridgeway now appeals, raising the following assignments of error for our review:

I. The trial court's judgment rested on a materially inaccurate description of the procedural record.

II. The March 13 motion presented circumstances relevant to Civ.R. 6(B)(2), but the final judgment does not show that those circumstances were evaluated accurately.

III. The May 29 filing does not independently prove glaucoma, but it confirms that the record had materially changed before judgment.

IV. The appropriate remedy is reversal and remand for a proper exercise of discretion before disposition on the expert-evidence ground.

{¶ 9} Initially, we note that Ridgeway proceeded pro se at the trial-court level, as he does here on appeal. "'It is well established that pro se litigants are presumed to have knowledge of the law and legal procedures and that they are held to the same standards as litigants who are represented by counsel.'" *State ex rel. Fuller v. Mengel*, 2003-Ohio-6448, ¶ 10, quoting *Sabouri v. Ohio Dept. of Job & Family Servs.*, 145 Ohio App.3d 651, 654 (10th Dist. 2001). Indeed, "'[p]ro se litigants are not entitled to greater rights, and they must accept the results of their own mistakes.'" *Fazio v. Gruttadauria*, 2008-Ohio-4586, ¶ 9 (8th Dist.), quoting *Williams v. Lo*, 2008-Ohio-2804, ¶ 18 (10th Dist.). With these concepts in mind, we turn to Ridgeway's assignments of error, which are all subject to an abuse-of-discretion standard of review. An abuse of discretion occurs when a court exercises "its judgment, in an unwarranted way, in regard to a matter over which it has discretionary authority." *Johnson v. Abdullah*, 2021-Ohio-3304, ¶ 35.

{¶ 10} In his first assignment of error, Ridgeway contends that the trial court abused its discretion because its judgment "rests on a materially inaccurate

description of the procedural record." Specifically, Ridgeway cites to the trial court's findings that he requested "multiple" extensions of time to file his expert report and that "no expert has been identified." According to Ridgeway, he only requested one extension of time to file his expert report on March 13, 2026, and he identified his expert in his pretrial statement filed on May 29, 2026.

{¶ 11} Ridgeway is correct that of the four motions for extensions of time he filed, only one of the motions, filed on March 13, 2026, specifically sought an extension of time to file an expert report. However, the trial court's characterization of "multiple" requests by Ridgeway for an extension of time to file an expert report does not change the fact that Ridgeway failed to file such a report. The report was originally due on February 2, 2026. Ridgeway let that date pass without either filing a report or requesting an extension of time. It was not until over one month after Ridgeway's report was due — on March 13, 2026 — that he requested an extension of time. A trial court has broad latitude in discovery and pretrial matters. *Nakoff v. Fairview Gen. Hosp.*, 75 Ohio St.3d 254, 257 (1996). Here, the trial court enforced its deadline; it did not abuse its discretion in doing so.

{¶ 12} Further, Ridgeway's May 29, 2026 pretrial statement did not identify an expert who was prepared to establish glaucoma causation; the medical professional referenced in the pretrial statement opined on other conditions Ridgeway allegedly suffers from, but did not state anything about his glaucoma being related to his job. Moreover, Ridgeway's pretrial statement identified himself

as his sole witness; it did not identify an expert witness that he expected would testify on his behalf.

{¶ 13} The first assignment of error is overruled.

{¶ 14} In his second assignment of error, Ridgeway contends that the trial court abused its discretion by not evaluating his March 13, 2026 motion under Civ.R.6(B)(2).

{¶ 15} Civ.R. 6(B)(2) governs continuances and extensions of time and provides in relevant part that "[t]he court may act on motion made after the particular date or the expiration of the specified time if the moving party failed to act because of excusable neglect." Civ.R. 6(B)(2)(d). As ground for his motion for an extension of time to file an expert report, Ridgeway contended that he had not received Spooner's discovery propounded on him. That reason did not establish excusable neglect; that is, it did not prevent him from obtaining an expert to establish causation on his glaucoma diagnosis. The trial court did not abuse its discretion by not applying Civ.R. 6(B)(2)(d) to Ridgeway's motion for an extension of time to file an expert report.

{¶ 16} The second assignment of error is overruled.

{¶ 17} In his third assignment of error, Ridgeway admits that the medical documentation he provided in his May 29, 2026 pretrial statement "does not independently prove glaucoma causation, but it confirms that the record had materially changed before judgment." According to Ridgeway, the documentation demonstrated that he "was actively attempting to obtain medical-opinion evidence

before judgment." It was not the documentation that Ridgeway needed to survive Spooner's motion for summary judgment, however. The trial court did not abuse its discretion by ruling on Spooner's motion for summary judgment in the absence of Ridgeway's expert report.

{¶ 18} The third assignment of error is overruled.

{¶ 19} In his final assignment of error, Ridgeway sets forth his request for relief: for us to reverse the trial court's judgment granting summary judgment in favor of Spooner and remand the case "so that the trial court may exercise its Civ.R. 6(B)(2) discretion on an accurate procedural record, including the fact that there was one expert-report extension and the fact that a provider had been identified before final judgment." Because we have found no merit to Ridgeway's contentions, his request for relief is without merit.

{¶ 20} The fourth assignment of error is overruled.

{¶ 21} Judgment affirmed.

It is ordered that appellee recover from appellant costs herein taxed.

The court finds there were reasonable grounds for this appeal.

It is ordered that a special mandate be sent to said court to carry this judgment into execution.

A certified copy of this entry shall constitute the mandate pursuant to Rule 27 of the Rules of Appellate Procedure.

MICHAEL JOHN RYAN, PRESIDING JUDGE

EILEEN A. GALLAGHER, J., and
TIMOTHY W. CLARY, J., CONCUR